

# Oliver Warman

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Late Welsh Guards

By Paul de Zulueta

Formerly Welsh Guards

Oliver Warman set his heart on being a Coldstreamer, but he was turned down because he had a stammer. His College Commander at Sandhurst, however, sat next to Oliver at a cadet dinner night remarking that, “apart from the occasional splutter over pudding, I don’t think he will have any difficulties giving a proper word of command.” He went on, “but I do recognise that the Coldstream Guards have rather higher expectations of the timbre of their officers’ voices, so he may be better suited elsewhere.” Given that singing and a strong, distinctive voice is part of the Welsh national identity, it was ironic that ‘elsewhere’ for Oliver was the Welsh Guards. He was commissioned in 1953 and served with the Regiment and the Army until 1968.



*Sunset over Istanbul  
painted by Oliver Warman*

Oliver spent relatively little time on Regimental duty, although he commanded No 2 company before he went to the staff college and RMCS Shrivenham. He was a gifted staff officer, serving in Harold Macmillan’s outer office, as GSO2 at the Army Intelligence Centre, and as MA to General Shane Hackett in BAOR. But with little Regimental service to talk of, and a medical downgrade due to poor hearing, his prospects for promotion were limited.



Though Oliver had undoubted charm and was invariably kind to young officers, he could be a little acerbic and wore his intellect (Exeter university and Baillol College, Oxford) on his sleeve. Though this might have sat well at the Warden’s high table at All Souls Oxford, his peers and senior officers found it a little irksome.

As an artist, however, Oliver had a true and enduring talent. He had studied fine art at Exeter university but the principal influences on his development as a painter were the artist, Edward Seago, and the Newlyn school of art in Cornwall with its emphasis on form, landscape and natural light. His paintings were popular and sold well, particularly in France and Germany. A few found themselves in the collections of the Emir of Kuwait and the Sultan of Oman. If a former Welsh Guards officer had a grand house, and here he was spoilt for choice, Oliver would always win the commission to paint it. Almost everyone I spoke

to about Oliver’s paintings said they “were very liveable with and brightened up a room”.

Oliver was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of British Artists (RBA) in 1984 and the Royal Institute of Oil Painters (ROI) in 1989.

Oliver also found his metier as a battlefield guide. As he had served as MA to Shan Hackett, who had been a Brigade Commander at Arnhem on Operation Market Garden, he became something of an expert on this battle. Indeed, right up to his 85<sup>th</sup> year, Oliver was still planning and conducting battlefield tours.

Oliver's personal life was rather adventurous. He was married three times and had three children from his marriages: Justin, Christian, and Victoria who lives in New Zealand.

He found a measure of peace and happiness with his fourth companion, Caroline, but whom he never married. When she died of cancer in 2014, Oliver turned his face to the wall and his decline was rapid. He died on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017.

Oliver had great affection for the Welsh Guards and donated several paintings to the Welsh Guards Afghanistan Appeal for an online auction. They achieved very good prices which gave Oliver a good deal of joy.